



DUSK HOWLER

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Dusk Howler - Chapter 00-01 Part 1

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Prologue

Dusk Howler Volume 1: Prologue

Prologue

Translated by End

Clenching their fist tightly, every thirty thousand Paladins from the Castle Baskerville's monastery looked beyond the meadow. A young Paladin asked, "Do you think they will come?"

"They will."

"Do you think we can win?"

At these words, he glimpsed at his junior from the corner of his eye, avoiding eye contact. Not a single one of them thought they would come out victorious.

Even if 'Their' opponent were notable..... they were thirty thousand, and even then, they had two Saintess among the thirty thousand Paladins.

The old Paladin encouraged the younger, "We will win." At that moment, a cry was heard from the watch tower.

A large Bone Dragon flapped its wings, descending towards them.

“It’s here! The enemy! ‘They’ are here!”

were only a company of five.

At that moment the old Paladin caught sight of the Magician, garbed all in red, on top of the Bone Dragon’s head. He could hear the sound of the Magician invoking a spell. No, rather, everyone could hear the voice that was infused with mana.

“Meteor!”

The legendary 9th circle spell. Of he who have entered the Darkness in human form. Of he who overcame the Darkness and ruled over it!

Then the clouds split, dispersing into a ring like shape, and from it’s center, a huge meteorite began to emerge from the heavens. The blood red meteor expunged large tears as it came down.

The old Paladin felt the deep foreboding of the coming annihilation. In face of death, the Paladin spewed out his last curse.

“Jaiha! May you be cursed for the rest of your life!”

“..... Mr. Jaiha? Mr. Jiha?” Someone was shaking me, trying to wake me up. Only when I woke up did I notice the drool coming from my mouth, and hurrying to wipe it up.

“Ah, yes, yup!” From my surrounding, squeals of laughter erupted.

The assistant who was calling out the interview number spoke with an exasperated tone. “You must be quite confident about your chances, since you had no problem falling asleep before your interview.” The place erupted into a sea of laughter.

Letting out a large sigh, I stood up from my chair, ‘Did I hear right? I could have sworn I heard Jaiha instead of Jiha while I was half-asleep.’ Regardless, it was a weird dream.

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Part 1

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Chapter 1. The Path of Manliness

Part 1

Translated by End

Kim Jiha, age 21, ranked first in school, and never missed a day of class. While I was a bit sheepish about my university admission test, in my 3 years of occasional application to University, I had never once failed with my transcripts. But I had one fatal disadvantage...

“..... Mr. Jiha? Mr. Kim Jiha?”

“Ah, yes, yup.”

“Will you not answer the questions in our interview?” The professor asked, not masking the irritation in his gaze. At that moment, my throat felt completely blocked.

I could not even say I heard the question because I was so nervous. If I had said as such in this place, I would make a proper fool of myself. “My, my, my, my, answer.....” The palm of my hand was damp with sweat.

Then, without me knowing, my left leg began to shake like crazy. I drew in a big breath and pressed down on my leg tightly with my hand.

Everyone in the vicinity whispered about unpleasantly, and asked again, “So your response?”

“I, I, I, I, I, uh.....” The moment I met their eyes, I stopped breathing. I felt like the very air was pressing down heavily on my chest.

In the end, the professor couldn’t take it anymore. He slammed on his table and asked again, “So what was your reason for the charity work you did with UNICEF?!?” Ah, he asked about that. Thank goodness.

At least now I knew the question. Feeling a bit relieved, I opened my mouth and, “Yes, as a highschool student, I often thought about what I could do for the poor and needy people. So I was determined to volunteer personally for the UNICEF during my holiday.”

The professors looked impressed by my words. “During my time, I experienced various cultures and people. Above all else, it was a great opportunity to learn what it truly meant to ‘share’. Without a doubt, I think this was a gift I wouldn’t trade for anything else in the world. ”

“.....” The interviewers seem really touched and impressed that they were silent. No, thinking about it, the silence was too long. No, it was way too long. Right at that moment, I realised it wasn’t admiration but astonishment. ‘What cause such reaction.....?’ I realised right at the spot.

I was biting on my thumb. My teeth were biting my nails out of sheer habit during the interview..... I was so surprised that I didn’t even realize my left leg was shaking.

Shake, shiver, shudder.....

I received a phone call from my father in Busan as soon as I left the interview. It was the usual threat that, it's my absolute last chance, that if I failed next year's scheduled university admission test... he reminded me that the army was always waiting.

Doorway to a University is wide. But, the reality is, not being admitted to the so-called top universities made the whole thing meaningless. I have tried my utmost. At every midterm, at every exam, I studied exhaustively. For my university admission test, it was literally do or die, I wrote that test as if my life depended on it.

I attended not just the cram school in Jong-ro, but roamed all the way to cram school in Noryangjin as well. But not one cram school could fix my problem of freezing up.

For me, who don't always score excellent grades in my university admission test, getting preselected by a university was everything. Above all else, the University preselection saw the interview as most important.

Yet, at the same time, when my parent shelled out money for 14 years of private education, lowering my expectation and going to a rural university would not be tolerated at all by my parents. In the end, the only thing I could change myself.

If I didn't change, whatever I do, there is no use. 'I want to be cool.' But

the winds of fate never once blew in my direction. At that moment my phone beeped. Wondering what it was about, I tapped on it. Click, with that sound, I heard a girl's voice.

[Ah, hello. Sunbae!]

“Oh, how are you doing?”

[I am doing great obviously. I heard that you did an interview at our school! How was it? Did it went okay?]

She studied business management at the University of S-mo, where I just had my interview. At my silence, she just let out a big sigh.

[Ah, if only Sunbae stopped being so shy, you could be so great..... Our school doesn't seem to have the eye to see such talent.]

After saying such cool words, she erupted in warm laughter. A comforting laughter that settled my uneasy heart, which made me spill out everything that happened today. After listening to my story, she just gave out a big sigh.

[Sunbae, at this point isn't this some kind of illness? Maybe you should visit a psychologist and get some kind of treatment?]

“Yeah, I actually went there yesterday.”

[What did they say?]

“They said I should try playing Virtual Reality game as a form of treatment. If I do this with my consultation, they think it will be quite effective.”

[Oh, right. I think I read an article about this being used to treat an autistic child.]

As if she realised her slip of the tongue, she chuckled awkwardly.

[Right... as I said, if you did this anonymously, you can express your inner self. I think it's a brilliant cure. Ah! That game, I have a Sunbae who plays it. Should I introduce him to you?]

I wavered slightly. If I wanted to play a Virtual Reality game, I had to buy a Game Capsule. That entailed spending the tuition fee my parents gave me on a capsule. I wonder if I could possibly make up for it later.

[Sunbae, do you think you could possibly get into a better university by attending more cram school? If you think so, then do as you like.]

As the memory of the interview surfaces unexpectedly, my teeth began to clatter without me knowing. This was impossible. 100% completely impossible. There was no way back for me to run away or even a path forward for me to go. My parent will refuse to try and understand my situation, and on top of that, I had already failed three times.

Trying to use the same method again will only result in an inevitable fourth failure. 'Should I give it a try? Should I listen to the Doctor? Is this new method the only way?'

With a shaky voice, I asked, "So about this Sunbae. Is he attending S University?"

[Yeah, it's really famous. They even showed it on TV a few times.]

"How old is he?"

[Umm, I only know his student ID..... But he already graduated]

After hearing her side, I almost let my laughter come out. This guy graduated from a prestigious university and is still a hardcore gamer. While others were worrying about having a family or trying to get a job, this guy was staying at home and playing games. These types of people were so easy to dislike.

[Should I introduce you to him?]

Driven by the necessity to reply I said, "Yeah. Please do so."

He must be of some help if he had such expertise. Worst comes to worst, at least I would be able to mooch off some items from this guy.

Of course, I would come to regret such thought for the rest of my life.

[Oh, right! About the Game Capsule, what kind are you going to get?]

"What kind?"

At my stupefied response, she laughed lightly.

[You don't need to worry, there is a cheap version you can buy where the interest is free for 12 months. The engine is G-Force12000 and.....]

She began to speak words that I could not even begin to fathom. Later, as she meandered into the topic of mainframe and reconstruction, I waved the white flag.

"Alright, I will order what you suggested."

[Okay! You have nothing to worry about!]

The Capsule she chose for me was white, oval and made of some glossy material. The technician installing the Capsule was full of praises after seeing with his expert eye, so it must be quite a famous brand.

I decided to jump right in and connect the Capsule without bothering to read the instruction manual. Soon after completing the simple sign up, my surroundings became pitch black.

One, two..... You are now connected.

My body felt like it was being lifted and my surrounding scenery began to change rapidly.

Welcome to Trikia. Dear traveler, I am your Guardian Deity, Tethys. Will you create a new character?

Her skin was transparent and without any flaws. She was an impossible beauty that you would never be able to see in reality, and I being so flustered, stumbled at my word's, "Yeah..... Create."

Please choose your Race.

Around me, 10 mirrors suddenly appeared. In the mirrors were reflections of what I will be if I choose an Elf, or Dark Elf, or Dwarves and

such.

“I will be Human please.”

Are you sure that you want to be Human?

As I nodded my head, a window appeared where I could change my hair colour, face and even tattoos. ‘Yup, without a doubt, changing everything is the best.’ While I don’t really want to say it, but I had a complex about my face.

Yeah, you heard right. At best, I gave a neat and tidy impression. At worst, a very dull impression. For example, even my homeroom teacher of 1 year said, ‘Oh, were you part of this class?’ after seeing my face. As I think back to such time, it still causes tears to flow, but I will stop this story for now..... As I poignantly wiped the tears from my eyes.

I was thinking about even adding tattoos but thought I did enough change and press ‘Enter’. Then my apparent Guardian Deity spoke up again.

Your base appearance can change depending on your inclination and charm. Now, please enter a name for your character.

The dream from yesterday’s interview suddenly flashed in my mind. Hesitantly, I mumbled the name from my dream, “Jaiha.”

Your name is Jaiha?

I began to like it after hearing another person uttering that name. “Jaiha.”

Character creation has been completed. I will open the door to the new dimension.

Immediately the opening video began to spread and play right in front of me.

Three Goddess floating on top of a gigantic continent. One of the Goddess was in chains with her eyes closed, while the other two Goddess each flared their black or white wings as they attacked each other.

The Goddess of the Future, Raen. The Guardian of Light. As she held out her spear, lightning erupted from the sky. The Elves, Dwarves, Humans, and other great multitude of Races gave a great shout.

Seemingly hearing the outcry, the Goddess with the black wings took out her bow and retaliated. The Goddess of the Past, Erune. The Night Mother. The Bestial Races, Dark Elves, Vampires and similar Races unsheathed their weapons.

The side of Light and Dark collided. The ground reverberated and the floor shook.

Over the gigantic continent, a river of wind was created and in that moment, the Goddess wrapped in chains opened her eyes.

The Goddess of Present, Elraen. The Goddess without wings, her looks could be mistaken for a human.

Her ruby eyes were looking straight at me. I was frozen in place, captured by her eyes. Why did she.....? I shook my head.

‘This is the intro video. Only the intro video.’ I theorised that the program must have made the user automatically stare into her gaze. Her singing caused the wind to reverberate.

Twilight, The Sorrow that is Dusk. **Dusklight**, of that which left sketches of the destruction of the earth upon the sands. As the two Goddesses of Light and Darkness became entwined, the two continents collided and became one. But the continent of the Goddess of Present shifted further and further away.

As the opening video came to a close, a scary feeling came over my body, it felt like I was being sucked into a vacuum cleaner. Opening my eyes, I saw a field of green grass. To be more precise, I was falling toward the grass field!

BOOM! With the accompanying the sound, my bum became stiff and dull with pain.

“Urg. Even the feeling of impact is transferred.” They say this is Virtual

Reality, but at this point what was the difference with Reality? Back, during the keyboard and mouse days, I played the so-called classic games, but I could have never fathomed that games could evolve this much. Though first things first, I should probably contact the person Yunhe introduced me to.

I think his ID was Nine..... Though even if I had his ID, I had no previous contact with him at all. As I was standing around aimlessly, 'You have a message' suddenly rang in my ear. At the corner of my eyes, an envelope mark was blinking.

To: Jaiha

If you can tell me your location, I will seek you out immediately.

From: Me

'Did he know about my ID beforehand and was waiting for me?' My anticipation of meeting such kind person grew in my heart. Fortunately, the coordinate system worked similar to one of the classic games. Somehow, after much fumbling around, I found my location and told the person and he replied he would come very soon. I checked out my bag and fiddled around with my map while waiting for said person.

Even though they said this was Virtual Reality, I was amazed how human the NPC was. The sky was devoid of any clouds and was the frustratingly clear day. Seoul was a constant grey overtone. The tuition fee for cram school suddenly crashed into my mind. If my father ever found out the truth, I realised, I would never live to see the sky again.

"Ahh! Stop! This stupid thought!" Hell, why do I always have to go negative

on myself? Then, suddenly I heard a great 'Kwaang!' from one corner of the village. I shook myself off from my daydream and looked toward where the sound came from. At that moment, I froze.

Was that a humongous Bone Mammoth trampling on any beginners on it's path? Aahhh!!! Shouts came from everywhere. As the Bone Mammoth looked at it's surroundings with its blackish eyes, it stamped all over the 2 story inn.

Creeeek....

The inn's roof collapsed and the people scattered, trying to escape. I was so surprised, I was breathing in short stops. A guard walking nearby unsheathed his sword and shouted, "Those evil Darksiders have invaded! Protect the village, fight! We will reward anyone who joins!" As the guard finished speaking, a message popped up in front of me.

A Quest has Appeared.

[Protect the Village!]

Difficulty: Very Difficult

The Darkness has invaded even South Field, the furthest point from the war zone. While strange that the Darkness has visited this far, teach them the strength of justice to these atrocious and cruel evildoers. Help the guards in the attack!

Reward: Fame 200; Shining Guardsman's Sword

Death will result in Quest Failure.

“Wow,” exuberant sounds was heard everywhere. I didn’t know much but this, ‘Shining Guardsman’s Sword’ must be a really good item - as everything was written in white, but that specific item was in blue. I could see the sparkles in the eyes of the beginners near me as they began to take out their weapons. Among them, were some that looked like they were quite a high level.

Without a doubt, as the number increases the more courage that seems to be generated that even I found myself taking out my beginner short sword. At that moment, the huge Bone Mammoth looked in my direction. From its empty eye socket, I could see a glowing red, gloomy eye. Silent danger. But everyone’s eye was clouded to the promise of the rewards.

The Paladin who look like he had some levels shouted, “Chaaarrggge!” With loud cries, everyone ran toward the Bone Mammoth. The archers rained down arrows, Shamans summon Water Elementals. The beginners who couldn’t do anything like me just slashed our short swords zealously.

I saw at that moment. There was someone riding atop the Bone Mammoth. A man wearing a robe upside down spoke in a loud voice, “Is Jaiha-nim here?!?” The shout was accompanied simultaneously with the Bone Mammoth’s trumpeting and it’s trunk swinging left and right.

Every time the trunk swayed, a person was flung like a tennis ball. As if something was wrong, the man on top of the Bone Mammoth gave out a yell. As he yelled, skewers made of bones erupted from the ground.

Yaarg! People yelled out as they died. Then the man on the Bone Mammoth cried out cheerfully. “Is Jaiha-nim here?”

Fear of one's life, something I have never experienced in Real Life, I experienced it for the first time here. The surroundings were trampled into devastation as the Bone Mammoth ran like a bull.

Looking on the village that was soon to be a ruin, I squeaked out like a mosquito, "..... That's me. "

That man looked at me and spoke, "I can't here you~" Speaking like that, he pointed with his finger, indicating a place. 'Bank' was written at that place. From the tip of his finger, a dark aura bloomed and fired off like a bullet.

Kwaang!!!

The black aura ripped through the roof. The Bone Mammoth ran energetically toward the bank. As the bank collapsed, the employees cried out in panic as they escaped. The man picked up the money piece by piece and put it in his sack as he shouted, "Jaiha-nim, where are you!"

Right then and there, I woke up to the epiphany that something seriously wrong was happening. With fear swallowing me whole, I tried to press the logout button when the man snatched me by the scruff.

You cannot log out during battle. Please move to a safe zone.

Wha~ What! I can't log out? I was just snatched from the scruff of my neck! I should be allowed to log out from something so insignificant, right? The man looking at my struggle just smiled.

“Ah, well met. I haven’t been inside the Light’s Camp for some time that I got lost.”

“What do you mean you got lost! You destroyed everything in your path!.....” Was stuck in my throat and wouldn’t come out. That was because the face hidden underneath the robe was revealed.

‘Cor, a corpse?’ The face was not one that belong to a living. A corpse that walked and talked, I could feel my skin crawl.

The man, no, I mean the man corpse laughed with his blood red eyes. “Ah, if only I found the place sooner, I would have been here faster. It’s quite unfortunate.” Seems like he already forgot to say ‘I can’t here yoo~’ and going off to empty the bank.

This was just not it. So I swung my arm as I tried to escape from the man’s hand. “My apologies. But, but I think you were misinformed....., Uwah!” Despite my protest, the man didn’t even budge as he lifted me up and settled me on top of the Bone Mammoth. ‘What kind of person has this much strength!’

The man spoke, “Let’s go! Dumbo!” This moment reminded me of Disney’s, ‘Baby Elephant Dumbo.’ The timing was exquisite as the Bone Mammoth lifted it’s heavy body.

Kuuuuuu! Giving off a sound that caused goosebumps, it began to run. The man spoke again. “I heard about your situation from Yunhe. From now on please believe in me, and only me. I shall make you into the greatest man among men. Like me!”

‘What do you mean greatest like you!’ Was the scream that I held back with all my might.

The Mammoth built of only bones continued to run. Toward the sunset. “Ohohohoho!” The man gave a strange laugh.

‘I think..... I need to call Yunhe.’ Without a doubt, this was the moment that the game became twisted beyond belief.

Translation Note:

수인족 - translated to 'Bestial Race'. Terms probably going to change later, better connotation than Bestial would be Anthropomorphism but doesn't fit nicely in gaming terms.

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